Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

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Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

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   ~ OS X Update Arrives!   ~ People Are Talking!    ~ Aniplayer 2001 News!
   ~ March MyAtari Released ~ Atari Telnet BBS!      ~ PSX2 Gets On Web!
   ~ Spam Label Scrutinized ~ Elfback 3.0 Released!  ~ ERS Now Available!
   ~ Privacy Not Protected! ~ Privacy Bills Mount Up ~ Nintendo Online Sales

                     -* Pentium 4 Price Gets Slashed *-
                   -* Filters Are Facing Free Speech Test *-
                 -* Record Labels Oppose New Napster Petition! *-
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->From the Editor's Keyboard   "Saying it like it is!"
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""

Well, the weather has been nice, but still a little on the cool side. This
weekend is supposed to be really nice, so I'm looking forward to getting out
in the yard. Although it's a lot of work, I really enjoy working in the
yard. There's nothing like getting outside and getting everything prepared.
Seeing the results makes it all worthwhile.

In the very near future, we should see the first article from our newest
member of A-ONE, Tom (TJ) Andrews. TJ has been a longtime member of the
Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi, a member of ACE of Syracuse, and an avid
Atari 8-bit user. TJ's column, "Keeper of the Flame," will primarily focus
on the 8-bit. Although he uses other Atari machines, the 8-bit is still his
favorite. And we know there are still many 8-bit enthusiasts out there who
are interested in reading about their machines of choice. So, we're all
looking forward to having TJ join us shortly!

On a similar note, if you're interested in joining the A-ONE staff with a
regular column, or just inclined to write an occasional article or review,
or even commentary, drop me a line. We're always interested to hear from
you and welcome the opportunity to present your interests within our pages.

Until next time...

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                         Aniplayer 2001 v2.15

Hi,

There are a new version of d'Aniplayer on my site.

New on this version 2001 (2.15):

- On FALCON when 'without GEM' is checked the right click of the mouse
  as the same results than 'ESC'.
- Now you can choice a block into the horizontal cursor with SHIFT-click

or double click, or with the right popup of the main window. The
  beginning and the end are copied when a save box is called.
- Function 'INTRO' added in the Playlist.
- The quality option for MP3 (created in v2.14a) is now separated
  than the general quality option. You can change this option when
  an MP3 is played and save it (the MP3 quality option replaces the
  general quality option in the right popup and the main menu).
- Video MPEG more fast without DSP (20% for I-frames and 10% for P
  and B frames). And now the DSP writes directly to screen when
  'I-frames only' is selected under FALCON and 'without GEM'.
- With MPEG files, there are a new possibility to display 1/4 of
  I-frames in the display configuration box (for big pictures the
  speed is increased and it's the only way to listen sound without
  repeats).
- MP2 sound more fast with the DSP (it's important for video MPEG
  with sound ;-)). There are an average CPU load of 4% on my CT2B
  and MP2 44,1 KHz files.
- MP3 more fast with the DSP, now with the quality option is removed
  all MP3 44,1KHz files are played in stereo on a FALCON with a DSP
  a 32 MHz (CT60 or a normal FALCON). There are average CPU load of
  15% on my CT2B and MP3 44,1KHz files. Without DSP, the CPU load is
  reduced by some %.
- Bugs fixed: Save the sound of an MPEG file into an MP2 file,
  MPEG files > 524 Mo (the limit is now at 4 Go), etc...
- And more...

Regards,

Didier.

                            ELFBACK v3.0 Released

ELFBACK v3.0 has been released. It requires TOS 1.4+ and a
GEMDOS compatible file system (no long file names).

The only new feature is registration by key file. Also, the
improvements in data compression since 1997 have finally been
implemented, plus some minor bug fixes.

The move to v3.0 has more to do with ending support for all the
compression methods used by v2.0 through v2.11. There were just
too many of them, and some were unreliable. The LZA method used
here is about as efficient as possible, and has been thoroughly
tested. (I now have an external hard disk, which makes testing a
lot faster.)

If you have registered previously, contact me and I'll send you
a free keyfile.

******** E.L.F. Software *********
http://elfsoft.home.mindspring.com
      Supporting the TT030
      100% Microsoft free!

ERS Now Available Via Europe Shareware

Hi all,

Eric Reboux softwares (ERS "http://ers.free.fr") are now available via
Europe Shareware. The first program to join the list is WinFrame. It's a
new windframe for Magic (6 and up).

Excerpt (from the readme file):

1/ What is windframe?

Windframe is a small program that's utilised by MagiC for displaying
windows to make it possible to personalise the graphic interface. The MagiC
6 windframe is a MAC OS imitation, which also makes it possible to alter
the looks of the buttons of a RSC file. To radically change the windows,
all that "needs" to be done is to rewrite windframe completely. That's what
I've done, and it took me quite some time ;-)

2/ What exactly is offered by windframe?

-It supports 3D, textures and gradient colours. All these features combined
offers a MagiC user more pleasing effects and functionality than the latest
window-managers of other systems.
-The window/program title is "put" just behind the closer button.
-It's compatible with the Xgem system and Direct desktop.

Coming soon: Find It, Direct (a new desktop).

Bye,

P. Ricard (ES)
--
Europe Shareware http://www.europe-shareware.org

March 2001 Issue of MyAtari Available to Download

Dear Atari users,

I am pleased to announce that the March 2001 issue of MyAtari magazine is
now available to download from www.myatari.net. The latest issue can now be
read online or downloaded and read at your leisure ;-)

Talk soon, I hope everyone had a good Easter!

Matthew Bacon
URL: http://www.myatari.net
E-mail: matthew@myatari.net

New Telnet-based BBS

Jeff Mitchell has announced:

I've got the worlds first and only Atari ST telnet based BBS. Its
a rebirth of my bbs last seen about 8 years ago. Mainly its to be a chat
forum for like minded fellows, Atarians, and a gaming platform to relive
the old BBS classics.

 Please come check it out!

 http://www.skeleton.org/bbsindex.html

or just telnet right to "shadow.skeleton.org", logging in as
"bbs"

        jeff

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""

                              CCAG 2001

    ATTENTION RETROGAMERS, COMPUTER COLLECTORS, VIDEO GAME FANATICS!!!!

                            WE'RE BACK!!..

                              CCAG 2001
                    (Classic Computer and Gaming 2001)

If you like collecting old computers, video games, and enjoy using them
still, then come join us on:

June 30th, 2001
9AM till 6PM

National Guard Armory
IT'S ON ROUTE 57!!!

(actual address)
3520 Grove Avenue
Lorain, Ohio 44055-2048
(On Route 57, going North of I-90/Route 2)

IT'S FREE!

Both vendors and attendees!

Computer User Groups and vendors inside, flea market outside!

5,000 square feet of indoor space and an additional 5,000 square feet of outdoor space is available along with ample parking.

Setup: 29th, June, 2001
6PM-10PM

Please Call Ahead for Reservations:

Jim W. Krych   jwkrych@n2net.net
440-979-9295
Fred M. Horvat   fmh@netzero.net
440-286-2566
And these other CCAG 2001 organizers:
Thomas J. McLaren   sirthomas@uk2.net

Please visit this site:
http://tomheroes.com/ccag.htm

As of 04/17/2001
User Groups:
Erie PA Atari Group
TI Chips
Cleveland Classic Atari Group

Vendors:
C.S. Vintage Games
L.R.O. Computers
Tomorrow's Heroes
Retropolis
Songbird Productions
Video Game Connection
Ramcharged Computers

People/Organizations:
Fred Wagaman
Harry Dodgson
Alan Hewston
Thomas Mclaren
Andy Frueh
Classic Gamer Magazine
Curt Vendel(Atari Historical Society)
John Litva

Possible Attendees!!!
Michael White(Bally/Astrocade)
Atari7800.com

Special Guest!!!
Pitfall Harry

We are looking to do a "Classic Game Experience" this year!
One room is going to be set up for playing classic computer and video game cartoons and commercials. The other room is going to be an emulator room-MAME, etc.

We already have one person bringing a Crazy Climber cocktail arcade game,

John Litva. Please email us if you wish to bring an arcade game to the
show.

See ya at the CCAG!

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I've got a question for you... Does it
ever stop?

Life just keeps on getting more and more hectic. I had always thought
that, as we got older and more settled, things would be easier and the
pace would slow somewhat. It ain't happened yet, and it doesn't look
like it's going to happen any time soon.

Maybe it's not a faulty perception but a sign of changing times.
Perhaps this break-neck pace is a by-product of our speed-of-light
communications and easy access to just about any kind of information.

It used to be that we had no choice but to slow down some of the time.
Communication used to be something that required time. Now, simply
touch a few buttons and someone across the street or around the world
can share your thoughts. Then they respond. Then YOU respond to their
response, and so on and so on.

To compound the problems, businesses use this same magical
communication to buy and sell. Not only does this make business more
productive, it makes it cutthroat. And since their buyers and sellers
aren't really within arm's reach, it's US who pay the price. Of course
those buyers and sellers have their own employers, but that's THEIR
problem, not ours. Right?

Oh, and by the way... the next person I hear saying "You ARE the
weakest link... Goodbye" is going to experience a very old form of
communication! <grin>

Okay, let's get on with the news and STuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
====================================

Peter West posts this about Everest:

"To add to the discussion some months back about the Everest
clipboard. I have 'GEM Clipboard On' activated, but I find that
(at least sometimes - perhaps mostly) Everest doesn't save text
copied with ^C to the CLIPBRD folder on C:\, but to a CLIPBRD
folder in E:\1WORD_PL.US\ which it will create if I delete the

existing one. Even stranger: Trying to overcome this, I edited the
1st Word Plus program binary to change the scrap folder to
CLIP1WP. Word Plus created and used it quite happily, but so did
Everest! Even when I deleted the CLIP1WP folder in E:\1WORD_PL.US\,
Everest recreated it! Somehow it seems to be picking up the path
and folder name from Word Plus - but how? In MAGX.INF I have:
    #_SCP C:\CLIPBRD\   as well as
    #_ENV CLIPBRD=C:\CLIPBRD\   and also
    #_ENV SCRAP=C:\CLIPBRD\

but for some reason Everest ignores this. Any ideas?

Another thing: I have noticed that occasionally Everest won't
accept the [Alt]-ASCII combination for producing higher ASCII
characters such as Umlauts. *Mostly* it is OK, but sometimes
nothing appears in the dialog, though it will appear in the text
itself immediately after. Reloading Everest usually cures it.
Again - any ideas?"

Harry Sideras tells Peter:

"This is not an Everest problem, but an FWP problem.
For some bizarre reason FWP forces the Clipboard to within the folder
that FWP resides in. FWP didn't recognize a system-wide clipboard when
it was written (it probably pre-dated the concept tbh).

The only way around this is to reboot after you use the clipboard
within FWP as far as I know...

It could be interference from another program in the same session, but
apart from that, none."

Peter replies:

"I knew that FWP had that problem, but why does it affect Everest
as well? Even to Everest creating the renamed CLIP1WP folder when
one didn't exist (because I deleted it after FWP had written it).
But I have now made further checks and find that Everest seems to
use the correct clipboard if FWP wasn't run beforehand in the
session. So it would appear that FWP not only uses the clipboard
folder in its own directory, but that the system remembers this
even after it is quit and forces Everest to do this as well.

Note my correction that the problem only appears in the
Search and Replace dialog, but not in the text. I have not been
able to pin down just *when* it happens :-(Perhaps I should
check if this too is due to running FWP first?

LATER: It /seems/ to happen when I run Everest from the desktop,
either by double-clicking on it or using Thing's keyboard shortcut
for Installed Application. When called from within CixRead it is OK!"

Harry tells Peter:

"I've just thought that it may be possible to reload MAGX.INF or
NEWDESK.INF to correct the problem. Worth a try?

FWP must override the entire system environment, rather than affecting
single programs. That's why I suggest reloading the desktop
environment. Everest probably sees that an env var exists and doesn't

change it. I assume you have "GEM Clipboard On" in the parameters
menu? If it were "Off" it will probably force its own alternative
(which probably won't be C:\CLIPBORD\ either!)"

Don Wolfe asks about setting up Wensuite:

"I'm trying test the Demo version of "WENSUITE" I seem to have
everything setup right according to the Doc's. But can't get it to
dial the modem.. Anyone know what I'm doing wrong ????"

Jean-Luc Ceccoli tells Don:

"You're just using a demo version, which doesn't allow on-line
operation. However, as WenSuite is an unfinished beta-release, I
would advise you to use Draconis or CAB instead.
There again, Draconis seems to behave strangely sometimes, extending
the pages over tenths of screens, being slow and crashing often..."

Martin Byttebier tells Jean-Luc:

"Even in its unfinished beta-release Wensuite is much better then Light
of Adamas. Wensuite is rock solid and very very fast. Pages which took
almost a minute before Cab displays then are displayed in less then
20 sec with Wensuite. Adamas is even slower then Cab.

Some figures done on a Hades running freeMiNT 1.15.10b/N_AES 2.0.0, 256
colormode

Test: reading offline a test page containing 13 midsized progressive.
jpg's (35-65 kb) and two small gif's.

1) Cab 2.70e: load time: 1'46"31
2) Cab 2.80:   0'49"75
3) Wensuite 3.30c: 0'17"82
4) Adamas 1.72 pl3:   1'24"86

Note on Adamas. None of the 13 jpg's were displayed correct. In fact
one could barely see what the picture was.

As you see there is a big different between 2.70 and 2.80 but be aware
that this applies to progressive jpg's. If the page contains only normal
jpg's and/or gif's one will not notice a speed difference.
Some people have reported me that with MagiC one hardly see a speed
different between Cab 2.70 and 2.80

>There again, Draconis seems to behave strangely sometimes, extending
>the pages over tenths of screens, being slow and crashing often...

Crashing is the most important strength of Adamas. No program can perform
better then Adamas. It's really the World Champ crashing.

Last thing I heard about Wensuite was that one of the two original
programmers is still working on it. Almost a year ago one of these guys
said that they were thinking to release Wensuite as Open Source but so
far no sign of it."

John Linville asks about availability of Atari clones:

"Is it still possible to buy new Milan and/or Hades boards? In the US?
Where? And how much?"

'Dan' tells John:

"You won't be able to get one in the USA as far as I know, but you can order a board (with a 040 or 060 + S3 graphic card + cables necessary to install the board directly into a "Baby-AT case") directly from Milan. There are two boards available, one with the 040 and another with the 060 upgrade. I would wait before you buy the 060 board, my Atari dealer in Holland said the hardware is o.k. but there are some problems with the MVDI which have to be fixed first.(The board with a 040 is ok, I have one myself)

Address : info@milan-computer.de"

Andrew Harvey asks about surfing the net with a Falcon:

"I'm about to give my Falcon to a friend of mine. His main use is for music (Cubase) and I've set that up. The thing is that I haven't used the Falcon for about 18 months and he wants me to set it up for an internet connection. Mostly that's no problem (see setup below). Using CAB 2.7c and Sting I can connect OK, but when I enter a URL it seems to try to load but I get "Error -#34".

It's been such a long time since I used all this I can't remember what that means. I have a vague recollection it's something to do with the Cab.ovl, but I'm not sure.

I'd be very grateful for some advice.

Setup:

Falcon with 14 megs memory.

CAB V2.7c with Cab.ovl v.1.4400 from Dan Ackerman (whatever happened to Oliver Booklage's ovl ?)

Sting Dialer Version 1.15, STinG Version 1.15 (I know there are newer versions, but what I have seems to work and I'd like to get this up and running with the minimum of changes!)."

Lyndon Amsdon tells Andrew:

"[Oliver's OVL is] Still around. The setup is fine for internet. Sounds like the OVL needs changing, they can cause very strange problems. I don't have a URL for either Dan or Oliver's sites, but if you search I'm sure you'd pick it up. Does email work? If it does then it certainly is the OVL. It is either in CABs directory in the same level as the program or in the modules folder."

Glenn Bruner asks about accessing a hard drive:

"I have an Seagate Hard Drive loaded with programs to access on my ST.

I need to locate HDX 6.0 to access it. Does anyone know where I can find it?

Once I get it, how to use it?

I regularly don't use ST computers. Any help would be appreciated."

Lyndon Amsdon tells Glenn:

"That's AHDI if I recall correctly. Available on many ftp sites, do a
search for AHDI.

Installing it is easy, just put it all on floppy and insert in the
floppy drive. Click on the install program and away you go."

Ken Springer asks for help with finding STinG:

"It's been 2 1/2 years since I've had an Atari connected to the net.
Now I need to get my TT back up and running in this area.

Would someone post where I can get the current copy of Sting? I'll be
using CAB 2.5 and Newsie .94."

Lyndon Amsdon asks Ken:

"Have you looked on the chapelie ftp server? James Haslams site had
it as well."

Derryck Croker adds simply...

"http://sting.atari.org"

Ken Kosut asks for info about his Falcon RAM upgrade:

"A while back I installed a 14 meg RAM card on the Falcon.
I don't want to go into details, but during fitting,
one of the conductors on the connector of the RAM card
got damaged.

After a great deal of research, I found a connector
that would mate with an irregular pin on my motherboard.

The fitting went very well.
I booted, all programs work great for about 30 minutes.
Then I get vertical dashes on the screen and everything freezes.
I can't really reboot until the machine cools.

This same thing happened when I had the 14meg RAM card installed
with the damaged connector.
I took out the 14 meg RAM card and replaced it with the original 4 meg
Board. Everything worked fine from then on.

Well, I am miffed as to what to do.
I raised the Falcon slightly to allow more air flow.
That does'nt make any difference.

I tightened the monitor connector. That didn't do it.

Does anyone know what might be causing this problem?
Do I have to reinstall HDDriver.sys?"

Djordje Vukovic tells Ken:

"The poor board seems to be... well, poor. Probably a faulty component
or a bad solder joint somewhere, which gets worse as the thing heats up.
Does it work better if the machine is left completely open to reduce
heating?

Maybe you might measure supply voltage somewhere on the board, at power
up, and then after the machine freezes. A bad contact on the connector can
make supply drop out of tolerance after a while. If there are any TTLs
on the board, supply voltage can vary only +/-5%; other types of chips
are more tolerant."

Mark Bedingfield asks Ken:

"Does the card have a simm socket and 16MB simm? Or is it a 14Meg
genuine card? Sounds like a dickey ram chip.

No, you shouldn't have to reinstall HD Driver. If it works @4mb it will
be fine."

Ken comes back and tells Mark and Djordje:

"The card is a 4mb/16mb. Jumper is set to 16mb.
I have never tried it in 4mb mode. I was referring to the original
Atari 4mb board.

Simm module is PS/2 EDO RAM 16mb 4x32 60ns
Simm module comes off in one piece.

An electronic technician that I spoke with today suggested the same.
He can check the RAM for me, but not the board."

Harry Sideras asks about modems on TT serial2:

"I finally picked up a 57k6 modem recently, so before I set it up with
all my software I thought I'd move my existing 33k6 over to Serial 2
and ensure that was up and running first. Typically, I'm having
problems which I'm sure someone can help me with.

I've installed HSmodem 7 to look at the Serial 2 port and disabled
STinG. I've set my Terminal program to look at Serial 2 and selected
the 150 baud, which should remap through HSModem to 115k2.

The trouble is that the terminal starts up with the report that the
modem is online (which it isn't).

I've adjusted everything that would seem to make sense (and one or two
things that didn't), but to no avail. Can anyone point me in the right
direction with this problem?"

Pascal Ricard asks Harry:

"What about the DTR ?"

Harry tells him:

"On the modem itself the only lights that come up are DSR and HS,
whether booted into the Modem 2 setup or the Serial 2 setup.

Shall I confirm the options I've got setup with DRVIN and SCC.PRG?

I'm using Magic 6 and a Crazy Dots 2 graphics card, so the backplate
is plugged in internally and is hanging out of the VME port. The 9-pin
cable is dangling between the printer and monitor cables. The printer
is off. So, the settings are:

```
DRVIN:
Fastint  N         N
Exopen   N         N


         SCCM2     SCCS2
M2TT     U         U
M1EMU    U         U         (also tried with 2)
LANBIT   N         N         (also tried with Y)
LANEXT   N         N
LAN_S2   U         U         (also tried with 1)
DTRM2    Y         Y
DTRS2    Y         Y
M2DRI    N         N
S2DRI    N         N
RBLM2    16384     256
TBLM2    8192      256
SBLM2    256       16384
TBLM2    256       8192
```

SCCM2.PRX and SCCS2.PRX are renamed to SCC.PRG for each attempt. The
config files for my terminal are installed in a similar manner.

SCCM2 works perfectly - that's how I'm talking to you now!"

Jim DeClercq tells Harry:

"I have a TT, and a modem, and use Serial 2. I do not disable STiNG, and
according to the Modem Setup CPX, am calling for a baud rate of 150,
and am using HSmodem 7. CoNnect and STiNG to a PPP connect both work
without me changing anything."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same
time, same station and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

                              =~=~=~=

                       Keeper Of The Flame
                        Thomas J. Andrews
                         tj@atarinews.org

Back in the days of Myth and Legend, when the warriors of a community would
go off to battle a watch fire was set as a beacon. Designed to be the first
thing of home the returning travelers would see, it was a sign that what
they had left behind was still intact. The Keeper of the Flame had the duty
of maintaining that beacon, making sure it didn't extinguish until all had
been accounted for. Sometimes accident, illness, or the ravages of Time
would cause a Keeper to fall. When that happened another would take up the
task, for if the Flame were to go out, the Wanderers might never return.

I am the last of my community, the Final Keeper of the Flame. When I fall, the Flame will go out. There may be little hope now that the Lost Ones will give up the Madness and come back, but for as long as I am able, if they do return, the first thing they will see is that brightly-burning hilltop beacon...

So who am I? Why should I be a FlameKeeper?

I became an Atarian in June 1985 with the garage sale purchase of a cassette-based 48K 800 system. Over the years I worked my way through a series of 8-bit machines until I was using a 320K 130XE. My first paid publication was the Antic Magazine Featured Application for August 1989, Customer List Manager. I became the 8-bit editor for our local user group newsletter and 8-bit SIGop of our bbs, until the group folded in 1995. Several of my articles were published in Current Notes and Atari Classics, and I programmed two upgrades for the Ol' Hackers Atari User Group (OHAUG) disk newsletter software. I wrote two well-received shareware programs, Print Star and Reformat. Print Star printed text files in two- or three-column magazine-style pages, while Reformat would read ATASCII/ASCII files and output them in almost any record length.

These days, my primary computer is an Atari Mega STE, but my original 800 is set up and ready to go and it will have a home here as long as I do. The 130XE isn't put very far away, either. I'm still an Atarian, through and through.

One thing that A-ONE has been lacking since its inception is 8-bit coverage, and I'm here to correct that problem. I'll be reporting whatever 8-bit news comes my way about once a month - more if I get sufficient material. I'll be lurking about the comp.sys.atari.8bit newsgroup, but that's not all. I'll also be searching the Web for interesting 8-bit-related sites, and I'll showcase the best of them here. If anyone has a bit of 8-bit news or the URL of a good website, please email me at tj@atarinews.org.

The Digital Antic Project
http://www.atarimagazines.com

This site is dedicated to archiving all of the text and software published in Antic and its sister magazines, STart and Antic Amiga Plus, and making it available on the Internet. Project Head Kevin Savetz began this monumental task in July 1996, with two issues of Antic, creating the text files by scanning and Optical Character Recognition. So far, all of the text for all 88 issues of Antic appears on the site, as well as programs from 79 issues. If you're missing your copy of Biffdrop or Adventure Island, this is the first place to look.

You can wander through the entire index of the Antic articles, but be advised, it's a long list. You might better view an issue's table of contents, or browse through by author, column, or product review. You can even browse through images of the covers, or some of the old advertisements. Can't remember the details of what you're looking for? Use the handy search engine.

Work has begun on the STart archive, with 30 issues-worth of downloadable software available. Article text will follow as soon as it is scanned and proofread, but you can look at many of the STart covers while you wait.

Kevin will happily accept help from people willing to scan, proofread, or do any of the other tasks needed to complete the project. He also wants to

hear from authors who wrote for any of the magazines or from people
involved in producing any Atari-related products for the "Where Are They
Now" page. Contact information is on the site.

Well, that's about enough for this time. I believe there's enough fuel for
the Flame to burn yet another month. A Keeper's work is never done, though,
so rest assured, I'll be back.

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PlayStation2 Gets On The Web!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Nintendo To Sell On The Web!
                                     GameCube Delayed! 'Red Faction'!
                                     And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                    PlayStation 2 Gets on the Web

The hugely popular Sony PlayStation 2 (PS2) is to receive a software
upgrade called EGBrowser that will let gamers surf the Internet, pick up
e-mail and download MP3 music files via their game console, courtesy of
Redwood, California-based Planet Web and Japan-based Ergo Soft Corp.

True to the usual three-month to year-long lag between Japan and U.S.
releases for high-tech gadgetry and its software accessories, EGBrowser's
debut took place in Japan on March 29th, and has until now only been
available in that country.

"We're looking forward to it coming out in the States, and we're trying to
move it our direction as soon as possible," Parker Lee, VP of business
development at Planet Web told NewsFactor Network, without committing to a
definite American release date.

"They're projecting for Sony PlayStation 2 to ship ten million units in the
United States in 2001 and four million in Japan," Lee added, giving an idea
of the EGBrowser's potential. "Of course, not all of those will pick up
EGBrowser, but historically gamers have wanted to go online."

Sony's PlayStation 2 came out in the United States just before the holidays
last year and was the Elmo gift for Christmas 2000. People lined up in
droves, and many went unsatisfied as demand quickly exceeded limited
supply.

The new software will support new and upcoming PS2 online games, probably

its most important feature. Users will be able to connect their modem to the USB port in their console and get online quickly and easily with most Internet accounts, according to Planet Web officials. USB printers and keyboards are supported as options.

Ergo Soft has exclusive sales and distribution rights for Planet Web's PS2 Internet software and network middleware in the Japanese market.

While Planet Web serves three markets, including software for game consoles, set-tops and DVDs, its browser release 3.0 is common to all three.

"It's our core product. It's a very stable, modular core," Lee explained. "It allows us to port to many different chips and platforms quickly."

Lee pointed out that Planet Web's browser technology will work in other devices as well, such as DVD players to be released this summer that will let users browse the Internet. Another device that Planet Web has planned for possible fall release is an integrated television browser.

The Planet Web browser works on a regular television, and includes real-time grayscale technology with vector fonts for flicker-free text that significantly improves readability on television and other display devices, according to the company.

Other popular consoles have made online connections a priority, and Web access has become a key battleground between Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft's much-anticipated Xbox, which will have a built-in Ethernet port to allow broadband online gaming. Nintendo's GameCube console will also support Internet connections, including broadband.

Planet Web is also the creator of browser software for the venerable Sega Dreamcast, which made game consoles "the best-selling Internet appliance, with four million units in the U.S," Lee told NewsFactor.

Nintendo To Sell Game Software On Web

Nintendo will start selling game software for its popular Game Boy Advance handheld game console via the Internet on Friday, aiming to lure older players who often shop online, a company spokesman said.

The move would mark Nintendo's entry into e-commerce following similar ventures by rivals Sony Corp , creator of the PlayStation home game machine, and Sega Corp .

For its online sales debut, Nintendo plans to package its new golf game with an adapter for Internet-compatible mobile phones, which are surging in popularity in Japan.

When connecting to Nintendo's server, gamers can send game results to friends, or join golf tournaments organised by the game company, the spokesman said.

The package will be priced at 5,800 yen ($46.55), the same price Nintendo had previously put on the adapter alone.

Nintendo Delays GameCube in Japan

Nintendo is delaying the introduction of its GameCube video-game console in
Japan by two months until Sept. 14, the game maker said Wednesday.

The machine, meant to rival Sony's PlayStation2, was to go on sale in
Japan in July. The company still plans to introduce it in the United States
before Christmas.

Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi played down the move, even refusing to
acknowledge it as a delay, and was vague when questioned by reporters about
the reasons.

He would only say that it would be embarrassing if Nintendo could not keep
up a constant flow of shipments.

That remark seemed to hint at a possible worry about a parts shortage,
which hurt the launch of the PlayStation2.

Yamauchi acknowledged it will be a serious blow to Nintendo if response to
the GameCube is poor at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles
next month, although he appeared confident that reception would be
positive.

Nintendo, the Kyoto-based company behind the Mario and Pokemon games, has
scored successes with its less expensive and less sophisticated Game Boy
series, including the revamped Game Boy Advance that went on sale last
month in Japan. The Game Boy Advance is slated for sale the United States
in June.

But Nintendo has had problems making a profit with its more sophisticated
machine, the Nintendo 64, because of the greater money and time required to
develop games for it.

The company plans to announce the retail price of the GameCube, as well as
initial shipment and production plans, next month, Yamauchi said.

Square Announces the Release of FINAL FANTASY
CHRONICLES: FINAL FANTASY IV & CHRONO TRIGGER for
the PlayStation Game Console in July 2001

Special Bundle Package Features Two Classic Square
Role-Playing Games

Square Electronic Arts announced the release of FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES:
FINAL FANTASY IV & CHRONO TRIGGER in July 2001.

This special bundle package includes updated versions of Square's classic
FINAL FANTASY IV and CHRONO TRIGGER role-playing games, originally
released in North America for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System
(SNES) in 1991 and 1995, respectively. One of the best-selling franchises
in the history of video games, the FINAL FANTASY series has sold more than
31 million units worldwide.

''We are pleased to deliver these two titles to our North American fans on

the PlayStation game console," said Jun Iwasaki, president of Square Electronic Arts. ''Since the release of Chrono Cross last August, we've received an overwhelming number of fan requests to re-release CHRONO TRIGGER for the PlayStation game console. We have added a variety of new features to both FINAL FANTASY IV and CHRONO TRIGGER for this compilation and believe this set will appeal to fans of the original games and introduce a new generation of gamers to some of our classic titles."

The FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES set includes new opening and closing cinematic sequences for CHRONO TRIGGER, as well as several re-creations of memorable sequences, all of which add to the game's emotional impact, answer lingering questions, and offer insight into the game's successor, CHRONO CROSS. New FINAL FANTASY IV features include a ''dash" feature, allowing players to move quickly through towns and dungeons; a two-player mode that allows two players to participate in battles together; and a completely new, improved localization of the original unedited story. In addition, it contains some new cinematic sequences and includes all the original monsters, abilities, items and scenes that were not seen in the SNES version.

CHRONO TRIGGER was originally released on the SNES in 1995 and is a time-traveling role-playing game whose story spans several different time periods. A collaboration between Hironobu Sakaguchi (FINAL FANTASY series), Yuji Horii (Dragon Quest) and Akira Toriyama (Dragon Ball Z), the title was dubbed the ''Dream Project" and sold a record-breaking 2,500,000+ units in Japan in its original release.

FINAL FANTASY IV was originally released on the SNES in 1991 as FINAL FANTASY II. FINAL FANTASY IV is considered a groundbreaking title with its revolutionary Active Time Battle (ATB) system, which has become a standard in many role-playing games today. FINAL FANTASY IV was released for the PlayStation game console in Japan in 1997, but this is the first time that the title will be available for the PlayStation game console in North America.

FINAL FANTASY CHRONICLES carries an ESRB rating of ''T" (Teen). The suggested retail price is U.S. $40.

Remake of Midway's Spy Hunter Explodes Back Onto
the Scene Armed and Ready to Save the World

Midway Games announced that the next-generation version of the popular 1980s action-racing game Spy Hunter is in development for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Spy Hunter is scheduled to ship this Fall.

Spy Hunter is on a mission to save the world once again in a non-stop, action-intense game of mission-based vehicular espionage with breathtaking full-motion-video cut scenes, where the hunter is also the hunted. Spy Hunter must complete 14 high-adrenaline missions in a variety of exotic worldwide locations in order to defeat the evil multinational corporation, NOSTRA. With next-generation 3D design, incredible high-tech weaponry and a sleek new vehicle -- the G-6155 Interceptor - Spy Hunter must make split-second decisions while engaging in offensive attacks and defensive counter-attacks.

''The remake of Spy Hunter will take gamers on an explosive thrill ride with fast-paced action and relentless mission-based gameplay," said Helene

Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway. ``Based on the arcade classic storyline, Spy Hunter takes all of the original game elements -- villains, supply trucks, theme music -- and combines them with the power of the PlayStation 2 to create pulse-pounding, 3D action."

The G-6155 Interceptor is the ultimate counterintelligence prototype vehicle with morphing abilities, futuristic weaponry and lightening-fast speed. Depending on the terrain and danger Spy Hunter faces, the Interceptor transforms into a car, boat, jet ski or motorcycle -- making it a true all-terrain vehicle.

The daring reconnaissance missions lead Spy Hunter around the globe to exotic locations (Panama, Key West, England, Germany, France, Middle East and Venice). Each location is modeled to a high degree of photo-realism and provides recognizable landmarks and scenery to offer compelling visual themes.

Spy Hunter must always be ready for action as heavily-armed enemy vehicles lurk around every corner ready to strike at the first site of the Interceptor. Weapon trucks appear throughout the game to supply the Interceptor with offensive weapons including machine guns, missiles and lasers, and counter-attack weapons such as oil slicks, smoke screens and cluster mines. Players have no choice other than being totally immersed in the action with the clandestine plot that unfolds throughout the game, revealing who Spy Hunter is and what he is ultimately after.

SpyHunter Key Features

   * The G-6155 Interceptor, Spy Hunter's new vehicle that transforms into
     a car, boat, jet ski or motorcycle
   * Explosive weaponry for both offensive attacks, including machine guns,
     missiles and lasers, and counter-attack weapons such as oil slicks,
     smoke screens and cluster mines
   * All-new 3D design with photo-realistic levels and recognizable
     landmarks and scenery
   * 14 in-depth missions encompassing exotic worldwide locations, Panama,
     Key West, England, Germany, France, Middle East desert and Venice

       3DO Ships Heroes of Might and Magic: Quest for the DragonBone Staff
                   For PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment System

The 3DO Company announced that the Heroes of Might and Magic: Quest for the DragonBone Staff game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system has shipped to retail outlets throughout North America. The award-winning Heroes of Might and Magic world comes to the PlayStation 2 console with an original game engine and streamlined play for top-notch strategy-adventure excitement.

An assassin's poison races through the King's veins and he's certain to die unless you can retrieve the DragonBone Staff, a powerful weapon that is also the strongest healing device ever created. Take on the role of Knight, Barbarian, Sorceress, or Paladin and travel by land, sea, and air to explore the vast and varied landscape. Choose your weapons and build your army wisely to capture villains and lay siege to enemy castles. Through exploration and battle the resting place of the DragonBone Staff will finally be revealed.

Randomized gameplay means events unfold differently each time you begin a
new game, and Heroes is rated ``Everyone," so it's perfect for all ages to
enjoy.

                         THQ's ``Red Faction" Set for the Ultimate
                              Breakthrough On PlayStation 2

THQ Inc. announced that development on its highly anticipated action title,
``Red Faction" for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system has
been completed.

``Red Faction" is scheduled to release on May 22, 2001 for a suggested
retail price of $49.95. Created by THQ subsidiary, Volition Inc., ``Red
Faction" literally breaks through the established mold for first-person
action games with its revolutionary Geo-Mod technology.

For the first time ever in the history of videogames, players will be able
to alter, deform and outright destroy the game environment in real-time.

``Red Faction" and the Geo-Mod engine have been receiving high praise from
both the videogame community and the mainstream press:

    * `` ... acts as a huge step in the evolution of videogames." --
      GamePro
    * ``One of the top 15 most anticipated games of 2001. Red Faction is
      shaping up to be the forerunner in a long overdue first person shooter
      revolution." -- CNN.com
    * `` ... this is one of the few PlayStation 2 games that truly makes me
      cringe, grit my teeth, and actually ache for want of playing it. It'll
      certainly change the way gamers see and play first-person shooters in
      the near future." -- IGN

```'Red Faction' continues THQ's goal of bringing new, completely original
titles to next generation console systems," stated Brian Farrell,
president and CEO, THQ. ``The revolutionary technology and engaging story
line will help redefine the action genre on PlayStation 2."

```'Red Faction' brings a whole new level of innovation and interactivity to
videogames," stated Mike Kulas, president, Volition, Inc. ``Now gamers are
finally able to do something they have always wanted -- alter and destroy
the actual game play environment."

                          989 Sports' MLB 2002 Brings America's
                       National Past Time Back to the Diamond for Another
                                  PlayStation Season

                       Andruw Jones Stars as Cover Athlete for the Most
                           Popular Baseball Franchise On PlayStation

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced that MLB 2002 from
the 989 Sports development team will take the field on May 8, 2001. The
latest installment of the popular MLB franchise couples the ultimate in
gameplay control with Artificial Intelligence (AI) consultation by
professional players and the most updated rosters and stadiums. With eight

modes of gameplay, MLB 2002 offers fans the ability to play through the
rigors of a full-length season with Season Mode, jump straight into Play
Offs or the World Series or even assume the role of general manager and
guide a team in pursuit of the pennant over multiple seasons with Franchise
Mode. All new camera angles and commentary by Hall of Fame announcer
Vin Scully and color analyst Dave Campbell combine to make MLB 2002 the
most authentic telecast available for a PlayStation game console baseball
game.

With input from nearly 20 MLB players, MLB 2002 features more than 300
Major League motion-captured animations with 250 personalized moves
ranging from Randy Johnson's nasty 3/4 delivery to El Duke's unmistakable
leg kick. Players are closely modeled after their real-life counterparts,
including details such as facial hair, and consumers can play at stadiums
across the country, such as the brand-new PNC Park in Pittsburgh.

''MLB 2002 provides the most realistic baseball game available for
PlayStation," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer
Entertainment America Inc. ''The 989 Sports team has combined the classic
elements of its previous release with new features that really give the
player a first-hand experience of what it is like to take a team all the
way to the World Series."

The 989 Sports development team sought professional consultation from some
of the biggest names in the game to make MLB 2002 the most realistic
baseball game on PlayStation. Batting AI was designed with the help of the
newest member of the 3000 hit club, Tony Gwynn, while pitching AI was
improved with input from one of the most feared relievers on the mound,
Trevor Hoffman. Consultation with top MLB managers helped fine-tune
defensive and strategic AI.

MLB All-Star and Atlanta Braves' outfielder Andruw Jones stars on the
package front of the game.

MLB 2002 for PlayStation Key Features:

   * Ultimate Control Gameplay -- Control is key to success. With Total
     Control Fielding, fielders dive, throw from their knees, crow-hop,
     twirl throw, throw on the run, and make barehanded grabs. The best
     batting interface in all of baseball videogames, Total Control
     Batting, is enhanced with an eight-zone location selector.
   * TV-Style Presentation -- Along with more commentary from the two-man
     booth of Hall of Fame announcer Vin Scully and ESPN color analyst Dave
     Campbell, all new camera angles provide the most authentic telecast
     available for a PlayStation baseball game.
   * Professionally Consulted AI -- Featuring batting AI designed with the
     newest member of Baseball 3000 hit club, Tony Gwynn and pitching AI
     improved with input from the top hurlers in the game including one of
     the most feared relievers in the game today, Trevor Hoffman.
   * Stadium Graphics -- Play at the brand new PNC Park in Pittsburgh or
     one of the newer stadiums in the league including: Safeco Field in
     Seattle, Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco and Comerica Park in
     Detroit.
   * Player Models & Animations -- More than 300 authentic Major League
     motion-captured animations with 250 personalized moves.
   * Multiple Gameplay Modes -- Eight different modes lets gamers
     participate in every aspect of MLB baseball. Modes include Exhibition,
     Spring Training, Season, All-Star Game, Playoffs, World Series,
     Home Run Derby and Franchise.
   * Authentic MLB Trophies -- Bring home some recognition, including the

Cy Young, Batting Title, MVP Award or even the World Series.
  * Compatible with PS one console, PlayStation game console and
    PlayStation2 computer entertainment system.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates MLB 2002
''E" for ''Everyone."

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                        A-ONE's Headline News
                  The Latest in Computer Technology News
                      Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                    Intel To Slash Pentium 4 Prices

An Intel spokesperson confirmed Friday that reports the company will be
slashing wholesale prices of its Pentium 4 processors are accurate.

Intel spokesperson Seth Walker told news sources that the Santa Clara-based
chipmaker's "goal [is] to bring the Pentium 4 to all the key mainstream
price points this year."

"One way to bring computer buyers into stores is to lower the bill of
materials cost," said Walker.

Prices for Pentium 4 chips are expected to drop on April 29th. Analysts
estimate that the price cuts will average between 50 percent and 60 percent.

Perhaps most significantly, prices for Intel's newest chip, the
1.7-gigahertz Pentium 4, will drop from US$700 on its April 23 release date
to $350 six days later.

Sources have said that Intel hopes to rekindle demand for its processors.
The company has taken a beating recently as more PC and other digital
device manufacturers have been forced to cancel orders for Intel's chips in
the flagging economy.

Intel also wants its 1.7-gigahertz chip to be at a mainstream price point
before the company introduces its highly-anticipated 2-gigahertz Pentium 4
later in the year.

By its fourth quarter this year, Intel would like to see computers with
Pentium 4 processors priced as low as $999 for a PC and monitor. Presently,
the lowest price for a Pentium 4 desktop system averages around $1,200.

An Intel spokesperson has asserted that the company cuts high-end processor
prices on a regular basis in order to create demand for its products.

However, analysts across the board are concerned that the chip-making giant
is taking a huge risk by following this strategy, especially given the
depth of the projected price reductions.

"If average selling prices don't get cratered, I don't know how that's

possible," Lehman Brothers analyst Dan Niles told The Wall Street Journal.

U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray analyst Ashok Kumar agreed with Niles' assessment.

"It is going to have a catastrophic impact on gross margins," Kumar said. "You're not going to see any seasonal pickup in demand."

Intel is not the only chipmaker cutting its prices. Principal competitor Advanced Micro Devices Inc. cut prices of its processors last week, and apparently cut them again on Sunday.

Although AMD's 1.2-gigahertz Athlon chip has outperformed Intel's 1.5-gigahertz Pentium 4 chip at equal clock speeds, Intel's decision to slash its Pentium 4 prices will probably increase pressure on AMD, which prices its chips by their megahertz rating.

Kevin Krewell, an analyst with MicroDesign Resources, attributes the policy to what he calls "the magic of megahertz marketing."

According to Krewell and others, megahertz is one of the most important determinants to pricing, despite its being only one aspect of a chip's overall performance. That is why, Krewell said, AMD is forced to sell a superior product at a lower price to stay in the game.

"AMD is forced into a frequency match-up with Intel, which is beneficial to Intel," Krewell said. "It's very similar to what Intel did with the Pentium and [AMD's] K-5."

Mac OS X Update Arrives

Late Friday Apple officially released the update that users of the newly released OS have been waiting for -- Mac OS X 10.0.1 is now available.

By using the Software update in OS X's System Preferences you can download and install the update. According to notes on Apple's Mac OS X page the update contains many improvements including better support for 3rd party USB devices, Classic compatibility and overall application stability as well as support for the popular open source Secure Shell service. For Japanese users, an update to the Epson printer drivers is also available.

After the install the update also does an optimizition -- something that was only found after installing the Developer Tools disk that came with the original OS X package. Many users felt this added to an overall speed increase while using X.

Washington Gears Up to Shield Personal Information

In Washington, people can't leave alone the idea that people have the right to be left alone.

On Capitol Hill, lawmakers who see a potential vote-winning issue that defies partisan political labels have introduced more than 30 privacy bills that limit the sharing of everything from online customer databases to

Social Security numbers.

Farther down Pennsylvania Avenue, federal regulators are scrutinizing Web sites' data-trading habits, implementing rules to protect medical records and negotiating privacy treaties with foreign countries.

On ''K" Street, the lobbyists' corridor, industry and citizen privacy advocates issue reports and stage news conferences with the hopes of shifting the privacy debate in one direction or another.

Most involved in the issue expect Congress to pass some sort of privacy bill before the next round of elections in late 2002, as public concern mounts over the abuse of personal information for marketing or surveillance purposes. Traditional political boundaries are ignored as Republicans and Democrats take an interest in the issue.

''The libertarian right and the liberal left are going to meet and squash the pragmatic center," said Rep. Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat who co-chairs the Congressional Privacy Caucus.

But with industry groups, Congressional Republican leaders and some of President Bush's appointees less than enthusiastic about the idea, all sides are digging in for a struggle that could drag on for several years.

The United States is widely credited with developing the idea of a legal right to privacy in the early 20th Century. But unlike the European Union, the United States has not passed a comprehensive law spelling out just what that right entails.

Congress in the past has barred the sale of drivers' license information and video-rental records, but has placed no broader limits on the common business practice of selling and buying customer databases.

Spurred by the growth of the Internet, concerns have increased over the past few years about possible abuse of tracking and data-gathering capabilities made possible through advanced technology.

Last May, the Federal Trade Commission recommended that Congress establish a comprehensive online-privacy law, pushing the issue to the fore.

''A lot of people have never thought how their medical information has moved from place to place, or their financial information is sold, or their child's habits at school," said Sen. Richard Shelby, the conservative Alabama Republican behind recent restrictions on selling drivers' license data. ''Congress will deal with it if the American people demand it," Shelby says.

Faced with this threat, industry groups have leapt into action to prevent the passage of legislation that they say could hamstring the now-struggling e-commerce industry.

Some groups have commissioned studies showing that business' data-swapping practices save consumers time and money -- $195 and four hours per consumer per year, according to the Financial Services Roundtable. The free flow of information stimulates competition and helps companies respond to consumer demand more effectively, they say.

Other players, such as the American Electronics Association, the computer industry's biggest trade group, have released their own privacy proposals in an attempt to limit the damage.

``I think that the real concern is that in an effort to pick an issue that gets headlines, Congress could rush to judgement

for a big, all-encompassing government solution," said Robert Holleyman, president of the Business Software Alliance, another hi-tech trade organization.

Microsoft Corp. announced in March that the latest version of its Internet Explorer browser, due out this fall, will contain a feature that will automatically assess Web sites' tracking and data-sharing practices and alert Web surfers to those sites that thwart personal safeguards.

Microsoft chief privacy officer Richard Purcell has blitzed Capitol Hill in the past month to argue that the Platform for Personal Privacy Preferences, or P3P, developed by a broad consortium of Internet players, will serve as a self-policing mechanism for the online industry.

Many in Congress aren't impressed with these arguments.

``How about flybynight.com?" Markey said. ``Is there anything that Microsoft can do to assure that flybynight.com doesn't ultimately view all of the information that they gather as just another commodity?"

Ironically, the more than 30 privacy bills floating around Congress may actually serve to slow down progress, as various committees and legislators vie for control over the issue.

``There's no consensus," said Jerry Berman, president of the Center for Democracy and Technology. ``There's lots of bills, and lots of things that need to be worked out and rationalized."

And, in recent weeks, Republican leaders in both the House and Senate have questioned the need for new privacy laws, saying industry self-regulatory measures should be given a chance.

So far, the White House has sent out mixed signals on the issue. President Bush voiced support for privacy protections on the campaign trail, but appointees such Timothy Muris, nominated to head the FTC, are widely seen as less supportive.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said last week he would implement a rule drawn up under President Bill Clinton to protect medical records despite the protests of hospitals and insurers.

But privacy advocates say comprehensive legislation may be stalled until a ``privacy Chernobyl" inflames public opinion.

``If that happens, those in political power will have no excuse," said Evan Hendricks, editor of the Washington newsletter Privacy Times.

Privacy Not Protected Online

Dozens of federal Web sites use unauthorized software that tracks Internet users despite policy rules that ban such information-gathering, according to a report to Congress.

The true scope of the problem has not been identified. The report said the National Aeronautics and Space Administration could not even determine how many Web sites it operates, so investigators could not say how many of them might be using the tracking software.

The report was culled from 16 agency audits, a third of the audits in the works. The other agencies are expected to release their findings within a few months, said Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

Thompson released the report Monday. It said investigators found 64 federal Web sites that used unauthorized files that allowed them to track the browsing and buying habits of Internet users.

In many instances, the agencies said they did not know the tracking technology was being used. But some agencies say they benefit from the data gathered by the electronic ''cookies," as the technology is called.

A cookie is a small software file that allows an Internet site to identify a specific computer that logs on to the site. Cookies can make browsing more convenient by letting sites distinguish user preferences, but the device has been attacked as an intrusion on privacy because they can track the kinds of Web sites frequented by a specific computer.

The U.S. Mint uses the software to operate an online shopping cart that is similar to what can be found on many e-commerce sites.

The departments of Education, Treasury, Energy, Interior and Transportation used unauthorized cookies, as did NASA and the General Services Administration, the report said.

It did not estimate how many people visited the sites during the audit, which occurred late last year and early this year.

The company Jupiter Media Metrix, which tracks Internet usage, said government sites are popular. The company estimates that 3.5 million Internet users went to NASA's Web site in March, and 2.2 million people visited the Education Department's site.

Ari Schwartz, senior policy analyst for the Center for Democracy and Technology, which follows privacy issues, called the report troubling.

''Generally when we think about privacy and the government, we want to make sure that the government is transparent and does protect privacy over and above the rest of the Internet and the rest of the private and nonprofit sector," Schwartz said.

His organization was among several that signed a letter Monday urging the Bush administration to fill quickly a post created by President Clinton that heads an office to keep tabs on agencies ensuring they adhere to privacy policies.

Congress ordered all agency inspectors general to investigate the use of cookies after the General Accounting Office reported in October that about a dozen agency Web sites were using the software even though a Clinton administration memorandum in June restricted the practice.

The only acceptable use of cookies is in case of compelling need and with the approval of the agency head. In those instances, Web sites must inform Internet users of the practice.

Contractors operating Web sites for government agencies also must abide by the policy.

The White House referred questions to the Office of Management and Budget, where spokesman Chris Ullman said the Clinton-era policy remains in effect.

''Privacy issues are of great importance to the president," Ullman said.

Because 11 Energy Department Web sites used the unauthorized files, Inspector General Gregory Friedman said the department ''cannot provide reasonable assurance" the privacy of Web site visitors would be protected.

General Services Administration Inspector General William Barton reported a contractor managed business operations of an agency site that used the tracking files. He said the agreement gave the contractor ownership of any information gathered about Internet users who visited the site.

Of agencies surveyed, the Transportation Department was most likely to use the tracking files, according to the report. It had them on 23 Web pages, but the devices have since been removed, according to John Meche, the agency's deputy assistant inspector general.

He said cookies were inadvertently added to agency sites when Web pages were reconfigured. ''Protecting Web privacy is an ongoing challenge because Web sites are constantly revised or reconfigured," Meche said in his report.

Filters Face Free-speech Test

A new federal law will force public libraries to filter Internet content against their will or risk losing federal funds, but free-speech advocates are fighting back.

The San Francisco Public Library, a large gray edifice that stands across from the city's sparkling City Hall, hardly seems like ground zero for a constitutional war over Web content.

But inside the library, where backpack-toting students can slip in to study and homeless people can duck the rain and surf the Web, a battle is brewing over what people - children and adults--can view on public, Internet-connected computers.

As a result of a new federal law, the San Francisco Public Library and thousands of other libraries across the country are facing a conundrum: filter Internet content against their will or risk losing federal funds.

The law, called the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), forces schools and libraries that receive government money to block Web images deemed harmful to minors.

San Francisco, long a bastion of free love and free speech, is taking a stand against what officials there see as censorship by refusing to filter content.

"Putting filters on the Internet sometimes blocks constitutionally protected speech," said Marcia Schneider, public affairs director of the

San Francisco Public Library system. "Many librarians feel that filters don't protect children from porn, that they lead to a false sense of security."

The filtering law--which is facing legal challenges from groups including the America Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the American Library Association (ALA) and an organization of California libraries that includes San Francisco--is the latest in a long line of attempts to regulate Web content. Although the founders of the Web envisioned a freewheeling community where people of all persuasions could communicate without the legal constraints of the real world, the self-appointed moral keepers of society have had a different idea.

Fearing that easy access to a flurry of pornographic and violent content could taint Net users in general and children in particular, some groups have set out to restrict what people can see and read on the Web. The results so far have been largely unsuccessful: Two major federal legislative attempts have been tossed out because of First Amendment violations. And most efforts at the state level have failed as well.

However, proponents of a content crackdown are learning from their experiences and tailoring successive rounds of legislation more narrowly in efforts to avoid the constitutional blunders of the past.

The major tool for filtering is software that resides either on a client computer or a local server. Such software was designed to help parents protect their children from smut, and filtering advocates are hoping that libraries and schools will install it in response to CIPA.

The local method of filtering has been the preferred approach in the United States and differs from steps taken in more oppressive countries, where governments have tried to use state-run Internet service providers and other methods to block content.

Of course, the debate over censorship is as old as the written word. But the Web has opened a new chapter of the debate by providing access to a world of content larger than any library could ever house, a world where sites catering to people's most-primal fantasies are just a mouse click away.

In some ways, peddlers of porn and other vices have become more insidious. After all, Web pages catering to fetishes of all stripes can be found at sites containing seemingly innocuous words such as "whitehouse," "Barbie" or "childrensbiblestories." What's more, once people stumble onto such a site--either unwittingly or intentionally--they often are trapped there by countless technological tricks including misleading metatags and a disabled back button.

It is this phenomenon of porn on demand--available anytime to people of all ages--that's alarmed individuals such as Donna Rice Hughes, an Internet safety advocate and former leader of the anti-porn group Enough is Enough. For years, Hughes, the Gary Hart love interest turned born-again Christian, has been on a crusade to combat the seedy side of the Net through regulation, a battle that has culminated with the latest filtering bill.

Hughes promotes government intervention because, she said, "parents...can't be expected to shoulder the entire burden."

Her targets these days are those she calls "pornapreneurs": businesspeople looking to make a buck by capitalizing on the underbelly of the Web.

Hughes began her battle in the mid-1990s, helping to craft legislation that eventually became the Communications Decency Act (CDA). The act was a wide-ranging attempt to clean up Internet smut, making it a felony to deliver indecent material to minors via the Net. Congress passed the measure as part of a massive telecom reform bill in 1996, but the ACLU, ALA and others challenged it on free-speech grounds. In 1997, in its first Web-related case, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned major portions of it.

Next came the Child Online Protection Act (COPA), which was attached to a budget bill in 1998 and dubbed the "son of CDA." Though less restrictive than its predecessor--the law targeted only commercial sites, preventing them from purveying sexually explicit material to children--a federal appeals court again tossed out major parts of it on First Amendment grounds. However, the Justice Department recently filed an appeal in an attempt to revive COPA.

What's more, a commission was impaneled in fall 1999 to submit recommendations to Congress on dealing with Web material that's harmful to minors. In a report released in October, the commission recommended parental education and self-regulation for the porn industry, but it refused to promote filters.

Despite that, CIPA, the law that mandates filtering, passed in December. Introduced by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., it represents a more tailored attempt at regulating content. Unlike the two previous acts, it restricts only visual depictions, affects only schools and libraries, and ties restrictions to federal funds.

"What we learned is that we had to try to find a way to extend the protections children have in the real world, to find a way to siphon off the material from kids without impeding on the rights of adults," said Hughes, who's also a COPA commissioner and a consultant to FamilyClick.com. "You need a targeted approach. You can't do everything all at once."

The major federal attempts to regulate content have had many similarities: All were more narrowly tailored than their predecessors; all were attached to sweeping bills in an effort to avoid public debate over the matter; and all have been challenged in court.

In the latest round of the cultural war over Internet content, the ACLU and ALA sued on grounds that the latest filtering bill violates the First Amendment by restricting content in libraries. What's more, the groups argue that the bill further accelerates the digital divide by forcing people who don't have computers at home to surf a filtered Web.

The filtering bill also presents technical challenges, partly because it requires the blocking only of visual depictions.

"The problem is just blocking out the illegal stuff," said Nika Herford, a spokesman for filtering company Net Nanny Software International. For example, how will a computer program distinguish between the nude, reclining figure in Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' "La Grand Odalisque" and a porn star poised for prurience?

"They think they are going to win because they've made the law so narrow, but the technology maybe can't deliver that," Herford warned.

To complicate matters, the U.S. Supreme Court has just agreed to hear arguments regarding the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996, a law

that makes it illegal to possess digital images of sexual acts featuring people who "appear to be" minors, even if they aren't. A federal appeals court in California has struck down that portion of the law, but three other district courts have upheld it, despite warnings from free-speech groups that it could make owning a digital copy of movies such as "Lolita" or "Romeo and Juliet" punishable by years in prison.

In addition to the federal attempts, several states have tried to clamp down on Internet porn. However, most have not succeeded.

Then there are court battles in Virginia and California regarding specific libraries and their filtering habits, or lack thereof. Courts in both states have ruled in favor of free-speech advocates. A Virginia court has ordered a Loudoun County library to stop filtering, and a California court has sided with a library that refused to filter.

So far, librarians are cheering their court victories.

"We continue to prevail in court, and we expect to do so again," said Susan Gallinger, director of the Livermore Library in California, which so far has fended off a court challenge by a mother who wants the library to filter. "It's the typical practice of trying to impose their values on everybody else. Librarians don't want to be put in that role."

Whatever the outcome of the filtering challenges, one thing is certain. The debate over Web content regulation will rage for years to come. When overturning parts of the CDA, Judge Stewart Dalzell called the Internet a "never-ending worldwide conversation" that should be protected from government intervention.

Still, James Schmidt, a San Jose State University professor and COPA commissioner at the opposite end of the spectrum from Hughes, predicted filtering proponents won't back off anytime soon, even if their latest bill doesn't pass constitutional muster.

"Until and unless that school of thought is satisfied that appropriate government regulationis being taken to protect kids, this debate will go on and on and on," he said.

                        Giving Spam The Network Boot

A promotion arrives in your e-mail box from a company you've never heard of before--but is it spam?

Consumers on the receiving end would probably say yes, as would many Internet service providers, which frequently adopt terms of service banning unsolicited bulk e-mail as a measure to keep spammers off their networks.

But, if a recent court decision is any indication, all may not be what it appears in the hotly contested world of Internet junk mail.

Last month, a New York state judge granted bulk e-mailer MonsterHut a temporary restraining order forcing ISP PaeTec Communications to allow the company to send commercial e-mails over high-speed Internet pipes.

"PaeTec is painting us to be spammers and we're not," said Todd Pellow, chief executive at MonsterHut. "This is a simple breach of contract."

Few spammers, if any, would agree to the reviled label, of course. But the MonsterHut case highlights gray areas that are opening up in the world of commercial bulk e-mail as some in the industry seek to cast off the shady past and go legit.

The dispute also illustrates the sensitivity surrounding bulk e-mail and the mounting tensions between e-mail marketers and the ISPs that are essential to their livelihood. Under the gun to deliver profits, ISPs are increasingly trying to land the big-fish customers that can buy high-speed Internet lines worth up to tens of thousands of dollars a month.

In the worst case, ISPs have resorted to signing what's known as "pink contracts," or addendums to acceptable use policies that allow the marketer to send spam or host a spam-related Web site on its network in exchange "danger money," or for a higher fee because of the risk involved. Late last year, AT&T and PSINet separately acknowledged within days of each other use of pink contracts that violated their respective spam policies.

"When an ISP is hurting for revenue, as many are right now, they're more likely to take on an unsavory customer," said John Mozena, co-founder and vice president of the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email.

MonsterHut, based in Niagara Falls, N.Y., said it sends out targeted, opt-in e-mail campaigns for clients such as OverStock.com, ProFlowers.com, Ourhouse.com and Giftbaskets.com.

The company says it is not a spammer, partly because it uses opt-in e-mail lists and legitimate return addresses on messages--something bulk e-mailers targeted by state anti-spam laws typically do not do.

Despite claims to legitimacy, MonsterHut's wedge in court appears to have come from a signed addendum to PaeTec's acceptable-use policy. The document, submitted in court filings, acknowledged that MonsterHut would send "targeted" e-mails and that PaeTec may receive up to 2 percent of the volume of e-mails sent back in complaints from consumers. In other words, if MonsterHut sent out 1,000 e-mails, only 20 people could complain. In the event complaints amounted to more than 2 percent, PaeTec could terminate the agreement. The company also agreed to forward those complaints to MonsterHut.

For its part, PaeTec says MonsterHut violated the terms of its contract.

"We knew they were going to send e-mail, but we did not know they were going to send unsolicited commercial e-mail," said John Messenger, vice president and associate general counsel for PaeTec. "They told us that there might be complaints from the e-mail, but the language we agreed to doesn't give them a license to spam."

PaeTec's acceptable use policy prohibits subscribers from sending unsolicited bulk e-mail. Messenger said that anything contained in the addendum does not modify that agreement.

The controversy, however, doesn't end there. PaeTec is a reseller of Verio's services, and the deal with MonsterHut has drawn the attention that ISP, which also has an acceptable-use policy banning spam.

"Our understanding is that PaeTec didn't agree to any spam arrangement or 2 percent levels," said a representative of Verio. "Our acceptable-use policy applies to any company that they sign on, and Verio reserves the right to

shut down sites if we feel there is unsolicited e-mail going out."

The company is currently reviewing court documents.

In a bid to have the contract voided, PaeTec is making a plea to subscribers to sign a legal document charging that the Internet marketer MonsterHut is a sender of spam.

So far, PaeTec said that it received a dozen affidavits from consumers wanting to charge MonsterHut as a spammer. The document requires subscribers to attest that they never agreed to receive e-mail from MonsterHut, among other points. It plans to use the documents in a court appearance in May.

"The significance of these affidavits (is they prove) that the customers didn't opt-in to receive the e-mails from MonsterHut," said Suzanne Galbato, outside counsel for PaeTec.

John Levine, a New York state resident and the author of "The Internet for Dummies," is among those that have sent notarized affidavits to PaeTec.

Levine said he knows that MonsterHut is spamming because he hosts a handful of different domains on a network from his home and hasn't disseminated any of those addresses to marketers or Web sites.

"It's clear to me that MonsterHut scraped a bunch of contact information from the WhoIs database (a general register of domain owners) and is using that to send out spam," he said in an interview. "They spammed me for at least one domain that I don't host anymore."

PaeTec says it has received more than 750 complaints from subscribers about MonsterHut e-mails and it has received further notification from Verio about complaints.

MonsterHut said that it has only received 11 complaints from PaeTec.

But the complaints rolling into Verio can't help the situation for PaeTec.

"The terms they have given to MonsterHut are not Verio's If Verio finds that there really is a pink contract, Verio will undoubtedly kick PaeTec out of there," said Steve Linford, an anti-spam activist with the Spamhaus Project.

Despite the charges, MonsterHut says it's a legitimate company with a lawful contract. To send its commercial e-mail, the company gets names and e-mail addresses from companies around the Internet with lists of people who have agreed to receive information of interest from third parties. Therefore, the company argues, it is not spam.

"This is a simple breach of contract that allowed 2 percent complaint of mail, we didn't come within 1/1000 of that," said MonsterHut's Pellow, who added there was extensive communication between the two companies before the contract was signed. "We think PaeTec has backed themselves into a corner with their upstream provider, Verio."

What makes such a dispute so tough is that there are currently no federal laws specifically prohibiting spam or even defining what it is. Several bills, however, are being considered in Congress, including the Unsolicited Commercial Electronic Mail Act of 2001, or HR95, which provides criminal penalties for anyone who intentionally sends spam from a bogus e-mail

address. It also enforces ISP anti-spam policies and gives recipients and
ISPs the right to act against spammers. But modifications made to the bill,
which was www.cnet.com/news/0-1005-200-5335487.html">passed the House
Commerce Committee last month, have taken some of the teeth out of its
original form, consumer advocates say.

About 18 states have enacted spam legislation. California, for example,
approved a bill in September 1998 that requires unsolicited commercial
e-mail to include opt-out instructions and contact information, and opt-out
requests must be honored.

HR95 goes further by defining spam. Its three main characteristics are that
it comes with forged return addresses, has deceiving headers, and doesn't
allow consumers a valid way to opt-out.

But MonsterHut says that its e-mail does not violate any of these
guidelines. And more of this type of e-mail will crop up on the Internet,
according to Pellow.

"There's an enormous, growing body of mail where people send e-mail with
legitimate return addresses, with accurate headers and a working opt-out
mechanism," he said. "Not all unsolicited e-mail is spam. But the e-mail
most certainly comes from something you've done online where companies have
partnerships to exchange that information."

Record Labels Oppose Napster's Rehearing Petition

Major record labels planned to file on Wednesday legal documents opposing
efforts by song-swap company Napster -- now operating under a crippling
injunction -- to get a rehearing in a San Francisco appeals court.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit ruled in February that
Napster was infringing on copyrights and directed Judge Marilyn Hall Patel
of the U.S. District Court in San Francisco to issue a preliminary
injunction.

Napster requested a rehearing shortly after the appeals court decision in
February and has subsequently asked if it could supplement that request
with material from proceedings at the U.S. District Court, which issued the
injunction.

Patel issued the injunction on March 5, requiring Napster to bar the
trading of copyrighted songs from its directory. The judge also recently
held a hearing related to Napster's compliance.

''We're going to oppose (Napster's request) on grounds that anything that
transpires in the District Court after the court of appeals (February)
opinion is not relevant to the petition for a rehearing," said Russell
Frackman, another attorney representing major music labels.

Napster's lawyers say the positions advanced by the labels since the
injunction show how the language in the 9th Circuit opinion can at times
have contradictory interpretations.

''Our en banc petition (request for a re-hearing) sought review on the
grounds that certain language in the 9th Circuit opinion had the potential
for providing contradictory directives and overriding an important

precedent set by Sony Betamax case," said Robert Silver, an attorney at Boies, Schiller, which is representing Napster.

He cited a precedent from an earlier case involving the Sony Betamax, which held that reproduction technology used for substantial non-infringing uses cannot be enjoined, except to require that control over infringing uses be exercised within the limits of the technology's architecture.

''Napster is doing everything possible to control challenged uses of the system within the limits of its peer-to-peer technology, including pursuing intensively every form of technological innovation," Silver said.

The biggest labels, including Vivendi Universal's Universal Music, Sony Music, Warner Music, EMI Group Plc and Bertelsmann AG's BMG, first sued Napster for copyright infringement in December 1999.

Napster has come under fire for its inability to block trading of copyrighted songs completely following the issuance of the injunction. At recent hearing, Patel called Napster's efforts to block unauthorized music ''disgraceful" and left open the possibility of shuttering the service.

Music industry experts have said that many of the thousands of titles that record labels have asked Napster to block remain available on the system.

Napster's service, developed by a college dropout, has attracted more than 60 million users by enabling fans to swap without payment MP3 files, digital files created via a format that compresses the music on compact discs.

Several technical and music industry experts have called for Napster to filter its service by searching for songs with technology known as digital fingerprints to analyze the content of the MP3 files.

But Napster says it requires the file names to prioritize which material to block.

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